Handing over of travellers lodges to Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation by the ITDC.

*323. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:†
DR. SHYAM SUNDAR MOHAPATRA:

Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether any travellers lodges under the ITDC were recently handed over to the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) what were the reasons for handing over the travellers lodges;

(d) what was the staff-strength in each lodge and whether the ITDC has offered them alternative jobs; and

(e) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND TOURISM (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) to (e) No, Sir. The ITDC is, however, in correspondence with the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation to transfer Travellers Lodges at Thanjavur, Trichy and Kanchepuram which are located far away from the headquarters for exercising better control, management, supervision and integration with State Government's own tourism infrastructure. No final decision on transfer or on the terms and conditions of transfer has yet been taken.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, at last the Government has realised the fact that it is very difficult to manage the affairs from Delhi Sir, the management of some of the travellers lodges were transferred from the Department of Tourism in the ITDC in 1969. The then Minister for Tourism in the year 1972-73 made many suggestions for paying much attention to renovation and expansion of the travellers lodges I would like to know from the Minister whether the suggestions were implemented or not. Also I would like to know from the Minister whether it is a fact that hardly any effort has been made by the ITDC in order to boost the domestic tourism and low-budget tourism. That is why now you are admitting the fact that it is very difficult to manage the tourist lodges and you are handing them to the State.

SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT: As far as any orders or instructions given by the then Minister for Tourism at the Centre to have certain improvements in the travellers lodges are concerned, I am not aware of them. Particularly the hon. Member has not mentioned when those instructions were given. In any case, I am not aware of them.

Secondly, so far as the promotion of low-budget tourism is concerned, in this House itself I have stated that the ITDC does have certain plans for three-star hotels, two-star hotels as joint ventures with the State Governments in certain places where they are considered necessary. But the Ministry of Tourism has definite plan for promoting low-budget, economy accommodation. The scheme is known as Yatri Nivas and Yatrikas which I have already mentioned in this House before.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, already five travellers lodges and five restaurants have been handed over to the State Tourism Corporation. The staff who were attached with these travellers lodges have been transferred to the State Department. At the same time, the senior officers who were handling the marketing activities and other activities of these travellers lodges, have not been given any specific jobs. At the same time,

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the house by Shri V. Gopalsamy.

they are getting high salaries as white elephants of the ITDC. What are you going to do with this particular problem?

SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT: So far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, the lodges, as I have submitted, have not been handed over yet. The whole matter is under discussion. Our policy is that all the officers who are attached to the travellers lodges which have been handed over to some States, if these have been handed over to the Tamil Nadu Government, they are taken back. They can either go back to the ITDC with full protection of their salaries, or if some of them want to get retrenchment benefits, they can taken them. The idea is that nobody should remain unemployed.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: Sir, it is a well-known fact that Tamil Nadu Tourism Corporation is functioning properly. Its functioning was appreciated by our hon. Minister when he came to Madras. I have visited the Kanchipuram ITDC where I found not even a single room was occupied because it is one and a half or two kilometers away from the Kanchipuram City. When I enquired about that they told me that it was going to be handed over to Madras State Department. I was told this two years earlier. The hon. Minister in his reply has said that there are certain terms and conditions for transferring the lodge to the State Department. I would therefore, like to know what exactly are the terms and conditions. Secondly even though it is not somewhat pertinent to this question, as the Minister has stated that there is a joint venture with the Stae Government for starting the Yatri Niwas, I would like to know what exactly is the stage of starting the joint venture at the Corporation building namely the Rippon building, otherwise know as Kannappar Thidal.

SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT: I must admit I have a feeling that the Tamil Nadu Tourism Department have been doing a good job. I did appreciate them and I appreciate them again here. Similarly, the Central Government Ministry of Tourism has also been doing a good job. So far as Tamil Nadu is concerned it is sanctioning a number of schemes.

Now, So far as the terms and conditions of transfer of these forest lodges are concerned one is that we wish to transfer them on book value. Secondly, so far as the staff is concerned I have already said if the State Corporation does not want them, they can remain in the ITDC. They will be given alternate jobs and will be given retrenchment benefits. These are basically the 2 conditions. The Central overnment is keeen that the State Government should take it over.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We go over to the next question.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: Sir, he has not replied about the joint ventures. You have allowed this question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. Next question. Q. No. 324. Shri Chaturanan Mishra is absent.

*324. [*The questioner (Shri Chaturanan Mishra) was absent. For answer, vide col. 37 infra.*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: We go over to the next question ..o. 325.

PROCURING OF IRON ORE BY THE MMTC.

*325. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the iron ore mines in Orissa from where the